Jane Austen’s novel *Emma* invites, to a greater degree than her others, varied reactions from its readers. Soon after the novel’s publication, Austen compiled a list of opinions from her family and acquaintances that reveals little consensus, except that *Emma* was “not so interesting as [Pride and Prejudice]” (Austen, “Opinions” 38). Dissent among Austen’s initial readers generally focuses on her heroine, Emma Woodhouse, who abuses the social prerogatives bestowed through her role as the mistress of Highbury by remaining insensitive to the consequences her words and actions have on the community. Emma’s brashness repels many of her initial audience’s sympathies, but some early readers admire a heroine who asserts herself against the strictures of social propriety. For example, Austen’s niece “[p]referred Emma herself to all the heroines,” while her niece’s husband, Benjamin Lefroy “[d]id not like the Heroine so well as any of the others” (39). Austen, herself, projects that Emma is “a heroine whom no one but myself will much like” (Austen-Leigh 157). This statement reveals a personal affinity Austen shared with her heroine that, perhaps, illuminates Emma’s behavior as aligned with Austen’s own: Emma attempts to reconstruct Harriet Smith’s identity by inventing the story of the girl’s parentage, inscribing upon Harriet as an “author” composing and revising her “text.” By fabricating an identity for Harriet and manipulating her participation in the courtship system of Highbury, Emma shows an often-overlooked creative power. Yet Emma’s authorship is fraught with anxiety, for the text she creates shrouds an already existent identity in Harriet Smith that ultimately reveals itself to be independent of Emma’s narration. Enveloping the subjectivity of a

1 The relationship between Austen and the Lefroys is explicated by the editor.
social subordinate with a fiction proves to be abusive, for in doing so, Emma almost ruins Harriet’s chance for a favorable marriage. Having lost control of her text, Emma turns her authorial power inward and begins to inscribe her own narrative, a narrative that acquiesces to the system of novel convention—to courtship, marriage, and the common law system of coverture. This shift from author to authored establishes Emma’s nature as a written character, the construction of a female author, Jane Austen.

This reading contextualizes the symbolic meaning of Emma’s authorship—especially as it relates to authority and sexual autonomy—within the frameworks that characterizes eighteenth-century literature. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s groundbreaking work, The Madwoman in the Attic, illuminates the misogyny characteristic of the nineteenth-century literary environment. Austen’s contemporary writers understood authorship as a generative action, associating the spilling of ink from the tip of a pen with its anatomical analogue. Emma’s authorship inside the novel functions symbolically as a sexually empowering mechanism when understood in the context of the literary landscape outside the novel’s frame. Therefore, Emma attempts to transcend the masculine moral authorities under which she is subjugated by fathering a character. Emma’s domination over Harriet coincides with the heroine’s removal from the system of sexual gaming that is courtship, thus the novel links her autonomy and the exercise of authorial power. Of course, Emma’s pen and text are symbolic, so that, as Claudia L. Johnson describes, Austen’s text is politically charged without a conspicuous polemic (xxv). Through this subtlety, Austen’s Emma engages in not only political dialogues but also sexual-political dialogues, exploring and negotiating the tensions of a creative, author-heroine in a patriarchal

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2 R. E. Hughes describes this “microcosmic” critical methodology as “explicative and comparative,” “consider[ing] much of the detail to be indicative of the larger society which lies outside the limits of the novels” (242). For a full justification of this framework, see Mark Schorer’s “Fiction and the ‘Analagical Matrix’” (Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, ed. John W. Aldridge [New York, 1952], pp. 83-98.)
environment. In Emma Woodhouse, Austen creates a heroine who attains sexual power through authorship, subverting the patriarchal system by first defying it and then succumbing to it only after Austen reveals Emma’s subjectivity to be a female-created fiction.

Austen’s placement of inanimate objects in Emma has inspired scholars to explore the metaphors underlining of those objects, to research the historical and political meanings associated with those objects, and to suggest a semiotic relationship between the character Emma and the items that populate her world. For example, footpaths—as Julia Park notes—represent several thematic patterns in novel: “The characters in Emma guide, lead and follow: they improve, arrange, and finesse; they follow the way, the course, and the direction…everything is underscored by the resonance of the footpath image” (140). Emma’s selection of footpaths parallels her deviations from the morally correct course (142). Park explains that Knightly’s ability to manipulate the course of the footpath and his willingness to do so for the betterment of his subjects suggests his moral authority (141). David C. MacWilliams suggests that Austen stifles her frequently used “humor and irony” in response to the “cult of the sublime” in Emma. She uses natural imagery—that of the shrubbery in the garden scene—create a metaphor for Emma and Knightly’s emotional transformations, from “very apprehensive emotional states, to sudden shock, to a heightened joy, to a kind of bliss” (133). In this way, Austen adopts the “conventions of sublime aesthetic” which she inscribes into the novel frame, creating a subtext that illuminates their love. In addition to imagistic motifs, Austen uses objects common to the society of her characters as a vehicle for creating several tensions between characters and class striations: Katheryn L. Shanks Libin explicates the implications of the piano-forte and music played by Jane Fairfax, implications that would not have been missed by Austen’s first audiences: the “unusually detailed description” of Jane’s instrument, “and Austen’s unique use
of its maker’s name, immediately signifies [sic] its key importance in the ensuring drama” (17). Libin recalls Emma’s statement that Highbury is “‘a very musical society’” and foregrounds music’s centrality to the structure of the novel; music interacts with the characters as a mark of refinement, accomplishment, and economic status, a mark which creates and reveals tensions between characters (14, quoting Emma 277). Scholars analyzing the subtexts created by symbolic objects in Emma effectually underscore Austen’s subtlety: metaphoric interpretations allow readers to peer under the novel’s conservative diagesis and find possible subversions against the systems of class, gender and economic hierarchy.

Third-wave feminism and queer-theory scholars, as well as psychoanalysis theorists, have taken an interest in the radical implications of Emma’s coded sexuality and suggest links between her sexuality and power. Critics explore two related issues: her sexual identification and her sexual orientation. Susan M. Korba claims that “[Emma’s] relationships with Miss Taylor…and Harriet Smith exemplify her attraction to and infatuation with docile and malleable members of her own sex, women over whom she exerts control and influence” (140). Emma seems overtly attracted to female characters, and her assertions over the novel’s female characters “suggests a strong sexual identification with” Mr. Knightly, Frank Churchill, and even Mr. Elton (140). Lisa L. Moore demonstrates the “microscopic increments of class and status” Emma exploits in her relationships with other women as means of sexual subordination; in doing so, Moore ties Emma’s sexual orientation to her position aristocratic position and linking queer theory to post-colonialism in an attempt to show “lesbian history not only as an object of power but one of its agents as well” (110). Nicholas Preus is dismissive of notions of lesbianism, suggesting that Emma’s manipulation of female characters, rather than aligning her with men, enables her to carry “out a series of displaced sexual experimentations…using Harriet as a stand-
in for her own desire, as a buffer for the awareness of her own sexuality (200). Other leftist scholars have adopted Preus’s concept of “buffers” through which Emma experiments sexually. Marvin Mudrick couples Emma’s dominant position over Harriet with her deceptive submission to Churchill’s faux courtship to emphasize Emma’s resistance to the prescribed codes of female sexuality: “She took part so eagerly in the flirtation because…there she could smugly exchange scandal in the guise of wit, and be cynically and most delicately stroked into a pleasant (though wary) submissiveness by flattery without feeling, by assurances of her Olympian superiority” (204). Preus argues for a strictly heterosexual reading, and Mudrick, though he alludes to Emma’s possible latent homosexuality (203), emphasizes her heterosexual curiosity. By doing so, however, they foreground Emma’s sexuality and experimentation as a vehicle for sexual power and thereby align themselves with those who insist on Emma’s lesbianism. Avrom Fleishman solves the question of Emma’s latent lesbianism and her overt heterosexuality by suggesting a split within her subjectivity. Fleishman psychoanalyzes Emma, discovering two distinct psyches conversing within the character: the first is a subject with “projective neurosis” and “repressed homosexuality,” while the other “runs the risk of denying her own sexuality” (241).

Literary historians researching the cultural significance of the novel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries define the act of writing as inherently masculine and of reading, feminine. William B. Warner postulates that novel writers “mobilize a powerful vein of misogyny to locate the responsibility for the commodification of reading in women” (97). Because of the prevailing attitudes that novels, such as those of Richardson, exemplify virtue and condemn vice, and “it is supposed that the female reader will easily receive the impressions to which she is exposed,” the feminine connotation of reader is understood. Johnathan Sachs’s
thesis underlines the assumption of feminine readership by asserting that the Jacobian novel presents of a “set of exemplars” and the modeling of “civic and secular virtue” (270). While he extols the works of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding as the first generation of novel writers, Ian Watt suggests that because of economic reasons, most novel readers were women of the middle-class (43-44). Austen rises to break the pattern of masculine authorship and feminine readership: “it was Jane Austen who completed the work that Fanny Burney had begun, and challenged masculine prerogative” (298). More contemporary scholars fall in step with Watt’s assessment of Austen’s impact on the literary landscape. If, in the early-nineteenth century, “author” is understood to be a primarily a masculine designation, Austen, by producing a valuable commodity, created an economic viability for female novelists that undermines this attitude.

Scholars who examine the text and characters of Emma as embodying the novel mechanism, whether by reading characters or—in Emma’s case—writing character upon characters (Harriet Smith), engage in the larger discussion of the function of language. Gilbert and Gubar connect Emma’s temporary self-empowerment with Austen’s own authority, noting that while Emma’s methodology is harmful, it is quite understandable: “Austen emphasizes not only the immorality of this activity [writing], but its cause or motivation,” (158) that is, her boredom and isolation from society. Thus, Emma is more forgivable than Lady Catherine in Pride and Prejudice, who—according to Juliet McMaster—“uses language—or at least aspires to do so—as a determinant of reality” (87). Marvin Mudrick rearticulates Gilbert and Gubar’s claim that Emma, by exercising command of a text, removes herself from the subordinate

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3 Sachs’s argument is contingent on identifying Austen as a Jacobian writer, a label contested by other scholars who seek to place Austen inside and in conversation with different literary contexts.

4 Margaret Anne Doody takes issue with Watt’s oversimplified examination of feminine authorship and argues that popular acceptance of women writers was not achieved through the word of singular figures. Her more nuanced portrayal of the novel form’s evolution, however, still places Austen as a focal point in the history of female novel writers. See The True Story of the Novel (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996) 278-290.
textuality of the other characters until she must “fall from authority into the acceptance of one’s status as a mere character” (161). Joseph Litvak takes Gilbert and Gubar’s suggestion of the characters’ “fall into literacy” further, implying that because of “the artifice and materiality of written characters, moralism encounters significant obstacles,” that is, the reader’s awareness of Emma as a fictional character subverts the socially conservative moral of Austen’s novel (149-50). The novel’s tension is created by the degrees in which characters assume authority over each other by means of writing and reading: “Knightly dislikes” and is threatened by “Frank Churchill, not only because the younger man seems to be a rival for Emma’s affections but also because Frank presumes to ‘read everybody’s character’” (152, quoting Emma 150). Susan Allen Ford points to another instance of power derived from authorship; “the alphabet game [Frank Churchill] organizes at Hartfield” works to “hold both heroine and anti-heroine in thrall, allowing them the illusion of the power of understanding while rendering them separate and powerless” (114). His ability to do so is inherent in the act of manipulating language, “detaching words…from their contexts and allowing them to range freely in search of signification” (114). Both implicit and explicit examples of reading and writing allude to the mechanics of authorship outside the novel’s frame. When Emma and others construct stories and fabricate conjectures, their compositions are overtly analogous to the novel itself, and their activities parallel Austen’s own occupation as an author.

The semiotic relationships between inanimate objects—footpaths, piano-fortes, etc.—and the characters that populate Austen’s novel can extrapolated and applied to an object outside the text: the novel itself represents the power Emma has as an author of a text. Her text, Harriet Smith, signifies Emma’s ability to apply language to a pliable medium and mold it into a self-serving, fictional narrative, just as the novel ultimately signifies the Austen’s own aptitude. The
relationship between author and text has sexual implications as well: because Harriet is without a father-figure, Emma’s control over the orphan mirrors the control exercised by patriarchs, figured in the novel by Mr. Knightly, over their estates—including their wives. Yet Emma relinquishes her control over Harriet, allowing the text to fall from the scaffolding of Harriet’s identity. Emma’s loss of sexual autonomy and narrative authority is also a loss of subjectivity, so that the text’s self-conscious artifice undercuts the novel’s diastic moral—that Emma must relinquish the pen and become Mr. Knightley’s wife—and directs the reader’s awareness to the artificer, the author Jane Austen.

Austen’s first volume of *Emma* charts her heroine’s attempt to encourage a relationship between Harriet and Mr. Elton; Emma does not merely facilitate the match, but authors it. Emma’s ends are ultimately selfish: she is motivated both by a fear that Harriet would fall into marriage with Mr. Martin and an assumption that Harriet’s pedigree would merit such a match unfavorable. However, as she only knows that “Harriet Smith was the natural daughter of somebody,” Emma grounds her perception of her friend on a fiction that she herself constructs (19). “There can be no doubt of your being a gentleman’s daughter,” Emma tells Harriet, asserting a groundless claim in such definitive terms that pliable Harriet vows to obey Emma’s admonition: “you must support your claim to that station by every thing within your own power, or there will be plenty of people who would take pleasure in degrading you” (25). Emma takes advantage of the fact that Harriet’s parentage is indefinable and constructs her into the “exactly the young friend she wanted” to replace the lost Miss Taylor as her companion (21). While Emma is concerned that Harriet’s contact with the Martins aligns her in too closely with the yeomanry—the danger of Harriet marrying Mr. Martin and becoming “the very last sort of person to raise [Emma’s] curiosity” can never be far from Emma’s mind—she chooses to ignore
the possible repercussions articulated by Mr. Knightly that would result from Harriet’s intimacy with someone of Emma’s wealth and status (24). Because she is at the top of Highbury’s hierarchy, Emma must establish the social status of Harriet’s parentage and assign her to the appropriate position before she can adopt Harriet as an acceptable companion. Emma fills the vacuum of ignorance by asserting her own groundless conjectures, and founding Harriet’s subjectivity on a complete fabrication.

The narrative Emma constructs envelopes Harriet’s already-existent subjectivity. When Emma learns from Knightley that Harriet has accepted Mr. Martin’s marriage proposal, she can only exclaim that “[i]t seems an impossibility!” (370); Emma cannot reconcile this news with her perception of Harriet’s connections. This moment illuminates Harriet’s dual identities: her true subjectivity, in which “[h]er connexions may be worse than [Martin’s]” and the subjectivity Emma fabricates, which warrants such a match unthinkable (371). Once Austen reveals Harriet’s true identity, Emma’s prescriptive language and manipulating may be read as the heroine striving against the truth. Emma repels Knightley’s suggestion that Mr. Martin is a suitable match for Harriet, asserting “he is undoubtedly [Harriet’s] inferior as to rank in society…[Their marriage] would be a degradation” (50). Though Harriet, following Emma’s admonitions, attempts to remove herself from the society of the Martin family, she nevertheless finds herself in the Mr. Martin’s home. By this, Austen suggests that Harriet naturally gravitates toward the yeomanry, indicating possible essentialism imbedded in Harriet’s true identity that resists Emma’s construction. The novel reveals that, under Emma’s fabricated identity, Harriet possesses a definite subjectivity.

This fabrication illustrated in the first volume is an overt example of Emma’s inclination to construct and write fiction—to novelize. Harriet’s blank past provides Emma a space on
which to pen her parentage, and her complicity and vacuity allow Emma to continue the narrative. Austen’s narrator observes that “Harriet was certainly not clever,” and “strength of understanding must not be expected” from her; Harriet couples her emptiness with a “sweet, docile, grateful disposition” and “inclination for good company” to make Harriet willing to envelop herself in Emma’s narrative, covering her own subjectivity with the fiction (21). Emma writes on her friend with the hope the other members of Highbury, especially Mr. Elton, “read” Harriet. Emma’s portrait of Harriet is an example of Emma’s constructive power that distills the writing and maneuvering Emma engages herself in into one poignant scene. “What an exquisite possession a good picture of her would be!...I almost long to attempt her likeness myself,” Emma exclaims, ironically alluding the “likeness” of Harriet that Emma has already been painting in the mind of Mr. Elton (34). Harriet sits for Emma, and Mr. Elton reads (35-38). In the space of the scene, Austen places the characters in their respective roles: Emma’s flattering creation of Harriet’s image parallels the fiction of Emma’s novelization, and Elton’s reading represents his role as the reader and interpreter of Emma’s construction. This scene also signifies Emma’s folly: Harriet’s image and her real body are in close proximity, juxtaposed so that Elton sees clearly the distinctions between Harriet and Emma’s portrayal. His praises of the picture—not of Harriet herself—indicate that he “reads” the fiction, which “throw[s] in a little improvement to the figure, give[s] a little more height, and considerably more elegance” (38). Emma is blind to the motivation behind Mr. Elton’s praise of the portrait: “I cannot keep my eyes from it. I never saw such a likeness” (39). The likeness is the focus of his admiration, and his defense against the criticisms of Mrs. Weston and, later, Mr. Knightley—who point out the discrepancies between Harriet and the portrait—stems from his admiration of Emma’s artistic skill. When Elton confesses to Emma that she, not Harriet, is the object of his love, that she has “been in a most
complete error with respect to [Elton’s] views,” it becomes evident that what Elton admires in
the portrait are those discrepancies indicative of Emma’s narrative ability: he admires Emma’s
power to construct, to alter, and to fictionalize (104-5).

Emma derives a great deal of social prerogative from her position as Mistress of
Highbury; however, she is subordinate to the sexual authority of Knightly, subjugation that
Emma subverts by disavowing her femininity and exercising authorial power. Knightly, because
he lords over his own vast estate, is equal to Emma financially, so the authority by which asserts
himself over Emma is sexual: he is a patriarch. Early in the novel, Knightley commands Emma—
“Invite [Mr. Elton] to dinner…but leave him to chuse his own wife”—corrects her—“why do
you talk of success? Where is your merit?—what are you proud of?—you made a lucky guess;
and that is all that can be said”—and places himself in a role of authority that Mr. Woodhouse
has himself relinquished (12, 10). Under the patriarchal system, Knightley may establish himself
over Emma because Emma is a woman. However, Emma’s role as a novelist questions her sexual
identification: she moves and manipulates both men and women, taking it upon herself to
command, and subjugating her own woman, Harriet, all which serve to align herself more with
the novel’s male figures. She claims autonomy by resolving herself not to marry, thereby
dismissing her participation in the system of sexual politics in which her identity would be
enveloped by a husband’s through coverture. By resisting subjugation while asserting herself
over Harriet’s identity, she inadvertently engages in the same system she disavows, but from the
man’s power-position. Thus, the interpretation of Emma as a novelist supports the claims made
by third-wave feminists and queer theorists that Emma is sexually aligned with the novel’s men,
specifically Mr. Knightly.
Austen also sexually aligns her heroine with the masculine through the existence of two competing narratives: Knightley and Emma both assert conjectures and fabrications in attempts to fill epistemological gaps and approximate the truth. Knightley responds to Emma’s friendship with Harriet because of his concern for social propriety. Thus, he judges the novel’s characters based on their alignment to his arbitrary system of social standards, thereby constructing and assigning a moral value to their actions. This construction is clearly evident when Frank Churchill first delays his visit to Highbury. Knightley suspects that Frank eschews familial responsibility, and in doing so adopts the same prescriptive language that characterizes Emma’s manipulation of Harriet; Knightley subordinates Frank—who is absent and cannot assert himself—in such a way that mirror’s Emma’s subordination of Harriet. “A man at his age,” he asserts, “cannot be without the means of doing as much as [visiting the Westons]” (191).

Knightley judges Frank as “proud, luxurious, and selfish” based on the contrast between his vision of Frank’s life and Emma’s defensive excuses:

It is not to be conceived that a man of three or four and twenty should not have liberty of mind of limb to that amount. He cannot want money, he cannot want leisure. We know, on the contrary, that he has so much of both that he is glad to get rid of them at theidlest haunts in the kingdom. We hear of him forever at some watering-place or other; a little while ago he was at Weymouth. This proves that he can leave the Churchills… whenever he thinks it worth his while. (191-92, emphases mine)

If Emma’s treatment of Harriet stems from an over-awareness of class, Knightley’s prejudice against Frank is the product of his concern with class decorum. In each case, the authors inscribe upon their texts their own values. This image of Frank is not nearly as unfounded as Emma’s
claims to Harriet’s parentage. Knightley’s strings together facts with a cohesive narrative that suggests Frank’s lapse in character, deducing from what he “sees” and “hears” of Frank that his delay in visiting the Westons is ungentlemanly. Frank, when he finally arrives in Highbury, willingly wears Knightley’s texts as a disguise concealing his relationship with Jane Fairfax from the reader. Knightley’s construction narrative on which he founds his judgments of Frank mirrors Emma’s superimposition of her narrative onto Harriet’s identity. Their assumptions of authorial power link Knightly and Emma, as both construct fictional narratives that mask the true identity of other characters. Again, in the hierarchical structure of Highbury, Emma’s alignment with the patriarch amounts to empowerment: in their capacity as authors, Emma and Knightley are equals.

The radical claim that Emma subverts the patriarchal ideal represented by Knightly is undercut by Emma’s fall into the subordinate role of sexual power when she confesses that “Mr. Knightly must marry no one but herself” (370); however, this statement marks not only her loss of sexual autonomy, but also her relinquishment of authorial power. The prescriptive language that has signified her orchestration in the life of Harriet—“[Mr. Martin] will be a completely gross, vulgar farmer”—is now turned toward Emma’s own subjectivity (27, emphasis mine). Emma moves and manipulates her text by prescribing for Harriet an identity and pattern of behavior; therefore, when Emma begins prescribing her own identity, she ceases her authorial activities. She begins to act in her own life, to write her own sexual narrative that she has hitherto disavowed. However, in having the pen turned toward her own life, Emma’s subjectivity parallels to the fictional narrative written on Harriet; the implication to this alignment is that Austen portrays Emma’s subjectivity as a fiction itself. This moment is Emma’s “fall into literacy,” the precise moment in which the text exposes the “artifice and materiality” of a
“written character” (Litvik 149). The diabatic effect of this statement, that Mr. Knightly will marry Emma and that she will be subordinate to him, embracing her place in the system of sexual politics, is secondary to Emma’s “fall into literacy,” which subverts any moralism to be derived from her decision. The novel ends suggesting that, because Emma’s authorial activity results in near disaster, Knightly, who restrains and corrects Emma throughout the novel, rightly asserts himself over her patriarchally as her husband. The novel moralizes that attempting to remain sexually autonomous defies the correct system of courtship and marriage; however, because of the visible artifice in Emma’s character and her decision, is lost. The moment in which the heroine ceases to subvert the system becomes the moment in which Austen exposes Emma as a fiction.

Emma’s “fall into literacy” may subvert not only the conservative vision of the novel’s conclusion, but also her sexual autonomy and authorial empowerment displayed in the novel. Like the reappearance of a distinct narrative voice in the last chapter, Emma’s realization that she must write the narrative of her own life illuminates for the reader that what they have been reading is, itself, a fiction. Emma’s grasp of sexual power through authoring fiction, namely, the fiction of Harriet’s subjectivity, signifies Austen’s own subversion of the novel’s seemingly conservative conclusion. While Austen casts Emma as a moral exemplar whose abuse of authorial power threatens Harriet’s chance of happiness, when Austen reveals that Emma is a fiction, she reminds readers that the novel is a fictional construction. She underscores for the reader this awareness by reintroducing the voice of a distinct narrator is most visible during the novel’s conclusion, breaking the mimesis by conversing directly with the readers’ epistemology: “The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery or parade” (381). That which exposes Emma as a creation illuminates her creator, in this case,
another female novelist. The novelists exposure seems to contradict the novel’s moral that wielding authorial power to disavow patriarchy leads to failure; however, Jane Austen disavowed her own place in courtship by remaining an unmarried author. Where Emma fails in her endeavors, Austen succeeds. Jane Austen, as the author, wields her pen to create a realism and then to expose the narrative as a fiction to signify her position outside the system of sexual politics.

Jane Austen constructs in Emma a character who shares her own affinity with creating and manipulating a fictional character, a text. Unlike Emma’s portrait of Harriet, Austen’s portrayal of a person who would write a fiction over the subjectivity of another human is unsympathetic: Emma, in recognizing that Harriet is not fully under her control and may be in love with Mr. Knightly, sacrifices her authorial pen and accepts a subordinate role prescribed for her sex. Austen, in contrast, constructs her text on the proper medium and deconstructs the system that she refuses to be part of. Thus, Austen’s novel warns against the misappropriation of authorship, but that message subsumed by the example Austen sets for the in way which the pen undercuts the phallus.
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